

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8980

C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 2417

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CM, UR,

SUBJ: CAMEROON'S WORRIES ABOUT COMMUNIST ENCIRCLEMENT

1. SUMMARY. SECRETARY GENERAL OF PRESIDENCY EBOUA SUMMONED ME ON INSTRUCTIONS OF PRESIDENT AHIDJO TO TELL ME OF GURC'S CONCERN OVER INCREASING SOVIET ROLE IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, LEADING TO FEELING OF INSECURITY. GURC WANTS US ARMS AID AND INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO COUNTER THREAT OF ENCIRCLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. SECGEN OF PRESIDENCY EBOUA SUMMONED ME ON SHORT NOTICE JULY 5 TO TELL ME, ON DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS OF AHIDJO, THAT GURC BECOMING VERY CONCERNED OVER INCREASING ROLE OF RUSSIANS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. HE STARTED WITH EQUATORIAL GUINEA, WHERE SOVS ACTIVE. WHILE EBOUA WAS PRESIDENT OF CAMEROON AIRLINES, SOVS BEGAN REGULAR FLIGHTS TO EG VIA NDJAMENA, WITH EMERGENCY LANDING RIGHTS, OR AT LEAST OPPORTUNITIES, IN DOUALA, WHICH HE WARNED AHIDJO AGAINST AT THE TIME. ANGOLA IS NOT VERY FAR. CAMEROON HAS FRONTIER, AND TENSE RELATIONS, WITH CONGO, WHERE OPPOSITION TO GURC IS BEING GIVEN MILITARY TRAINING BY CUBAN TROOPS. CAMEROON UN PERM REP RECENTLY TELEPHONED EBOUA TO TELL HIM HE HAD HEARD ON NEW YORK RADIO STATION THAT 3,000 CUBAN TROOPS BEING SENT TO CONGO, AND HE HIMSELF HAD HEARD SIMILAR REPORTS ON BBC AND FRANCE INTER. CHAD REGIME IS NOT STABLE. NIGERIA SINCE OVERTHROW OF

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GOWON IS BECOMING MORE RADICAL AND LESS STABLE. AS RESULT, GURC

FEELS IT IS ACTUALLY BEING ENCIRCLED AND IS INCREASINGLY INSECURE. THERE IS AN INTERNAL OPPOSITION IN CAMEROON AND SOVIETS, WHO EXPORT REVOLUTION, ARE IN TOUCH WITH IT.

3. PRESIDENT THEREFORE INSTRUCTED EBOUA TO TELL ME OF CONCERN AND TO INQUIRE OF POSSIBILITY OF GETTING ARMS AID FROM US. GURC RECENTLY PURCHASED MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM US WHICH, EBOUA THOUGHT, SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR US TO SUPPLY MIL ASSISTANCE. HE HAD ALSO HEARD THAT US IS GIVING SUCH AID TO GABON.

3. IN ADDITION TO ARMS AID, GURC WANTS MORE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. EBOUA BROUGHT THIS UP IN CONTEXT OF WORRY OVER INTERNAL OPPOSITION, WHICH WOULD USE EXCESSIVE MILITARY EXPENDITURES, UNMATCHED BY DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIY, AGAINST GOVERNMENT. (FYI: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JUST CONCLUDED BUDGET SESSION, AND FIRST NEWS REPORTS SHOWED ARMED FORCES RECEIVING LARGEST SINGLE APPROPRIATIONS, WHICH WAS CORRECTED BY NEXT DAY'S CAM TRIBUNE BY ADDING VAGUELY RELATED ITEMS TO EDUCATION APPROPRIATION. END FYI.).

4. IN PASSING, EBOUA INQUIRED ABOUT PROGRESS ON FINANCING OF TWO C-130'S. I REPEATED TO HIM WHAT I HAD TOLD VICE MIN FORN AFFAIRS AND PRESIDENT HIMSELF ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF COMMERCIAL FINANCING. HE MADE SURE THIS WOULD BE FOR MILITARY, NOT CIVILIAN VERSION.

5. EBOUA CLAIMED THAT PRESIDENT WANTED TO CONVEY THESE MATTERS TO ME NOW BECAUSE HE UNDERSTOOD I WOULD SOON BE LEAVING FOR WASHINGTON. SINCE I JUST RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THERE, THIS EXPLANATION SEEMS UNCONVINCING. EBOUA HAD HEARD OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFLE'S TRIP AND IN THAT CONTEXT REPEAT GURC'S DISAPPOINTMENT OVER SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FAILURE TO VISIT CAMEROON IN APRIL-MAY. I EXPLAINED REASONS AND REGRETS, BUT POINTED TO GOVERNOR SCRANTON'S RECENT VISIT. EBOUA INQUIRED ABOUT LIKELIHOOD OF SCHAUFLE'S VISITING YAOUNDE ON CURRENT TRIP, BUT SINCE PRESIDENT AHIDJO WILL LEAVE FOR STATE VISIT TO FRANCE ON JULY 10, TIMING IS BAD, THOUGH EBOUA SAID HE WOULD BE VERY GLAD TO RECEIVE SCHAUFLE ON PRESIDENT'S BEHALF.

6. IN MY RESPONSE, I TOLD EBOUA THAT I CONSIDERED TIMING OF GURC'S EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN GOOD, THAT I WOULD REPORT FULLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY TO THE DEPARTMENT, THAT THERE WERE WELL-KNOWN CONFIDENTIAL

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RESTRICTIONS ON MILITARY SALES AND ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES, THAT ISSUE OF F-5'S TO KENYA HAD BEEN INJECTED INTO PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AND THAT I HAD BEEN EXERTING MYSELF ON BEHALF OF ECONOMIC AID, ESPECIALLY YAOUNDE TO DOUALA RAILROAD IMPROVEMENT, DURING MY MAY CONSULTATIONS.

7. COMMENT: CONCERN OVER ENCIRCLEMENT SEEMED GENUINE. MENTION OF AID TO GABON SUGGESTED THAT US IS DISCRIMINATING AGAINST SERIOUS,

RESPONSIBLE GURC IN FAVOR OF GABON, WHICH LESS SO. (FYI: I EX-
PLAINED GABON IS CLOSER TO ANGOLA. END FYI). TODAY'S CONVERSATION
MAY EXPLAIN RECENT GURC WAVE OF PHILO-AMERICANISM, WHICH PEAKED
IN AHIDJO AND GOVERNMENT'S ATTENDANCE AT BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
AT RESIDENCE EXACTLY ONE WEEK AGO TODAY. SCHAUFELE MAY WISH TO
CONSIDER STOP-OVER IN YAOUNDE, OR INQUIRY FROM EMBASSY TO EBOUA
WHETHER HE WOULD WANT TO MEET IN DOUALA JULY 14.
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